

The President's Daily Brief

10 August 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In South Vietnam, enemy forces have launched several ground attacks over the past few days in an effort to regain the initiative in northern Military Region 1. In the North, recent photography shows some flooding along the Thuong River and several breaches in one section of the secondary dike system. (Page 1)

Soviet party chief Brezhnev recently addressed senior party and government officials on the prospects for this year's grain harvest. (Page 3)

The Egyptians are reshuffling their forces to fill gaps created by the withdrawal of Soviet military personnel. The Soviet withdrawal continues and may near completion by the end of the month. (Page 4)

Satellite photography suggests that the Soviets may be in the process of deactivating some of the soft sites for the SS-7 ICBM. (Page 5)

Japan [redacted]
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VIETNAM

Communist forces are seeking to regain the initiative in northern Military Region 1. During the past few days, enemy forces in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces have launched several ground attacks on South Vietnamese troops. On Tuesday, North Vietnamese units launched the second tank-led assault against South Vietnamese airborne troops in as many days. The attack was beaten off, and one of the tanks was destroyed by allied air strikes.

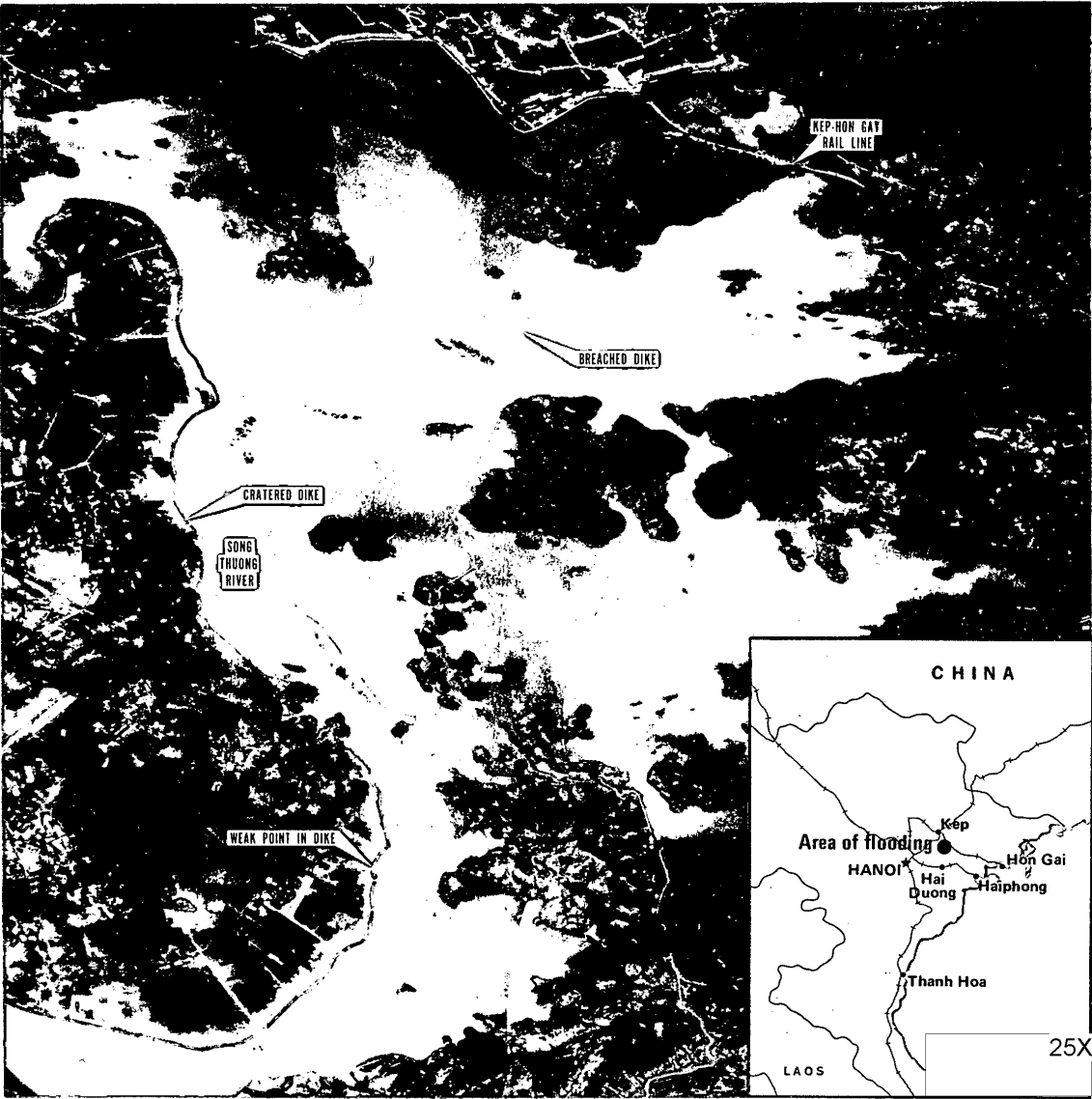
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South Vietnamese Marine units in and around Quang Tri City were also hit yesterday and the day before by heavy artillery fire. Intercepts indicate that the enemy artillery regiment responsible for the shelling has ordered its subordinate units to increase the tempo of the attacks. In addition, the headquarters of the North Vietnamese 308th Division has moved out of the western foothills, where the division has been resting and refitting for the past several weeks. It is now about one mile west of Quang Tri City in a position to counter nearby South Vietnamese Marine units.

Elsewhere in the country, heavy fighting continues in Bien Hoa Province northeast of Saigon, where enemy units are reported to be in control of several villages northeast of the district capital of Long Thanh. Government territorial forces so far have suffered heavy casualties, but reinforcements, supported by heavy allied air strikes, have begun a counterattack.

(continued)

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Aerial photography of North Vietnam on 30 July shows a small area of flooding about ten miles north of Hai Duong along the Thuong River. Several breaches are evident in one section of the secondary dike system, and water is overflowing in a number of other sections. The area, located just south of the Kep - Hon Gai railroad, is extremely low-lying and is subject to annual flooding. Nearby dikes clearly show the marks of repair from last year's flood, and it seems likely that the observed breaches were caused partly by the undermining effects of the 1971 floods.

* * *

Hanoi has undertaken to counter the allies' psychological warfare campaign. This is a rare occurrence; North Vietnam has seldom chosen to respond directly to allied propaganda. Recently, the army newspaper published a long directive which warned the population not to read airdropped leaflets or to listen to foreign broadcasts. For foreign consumption, Hanoi is also taking steps to counter published evidence of North Vietnamese atrocities in captured areas of South Vietnam.

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USSR

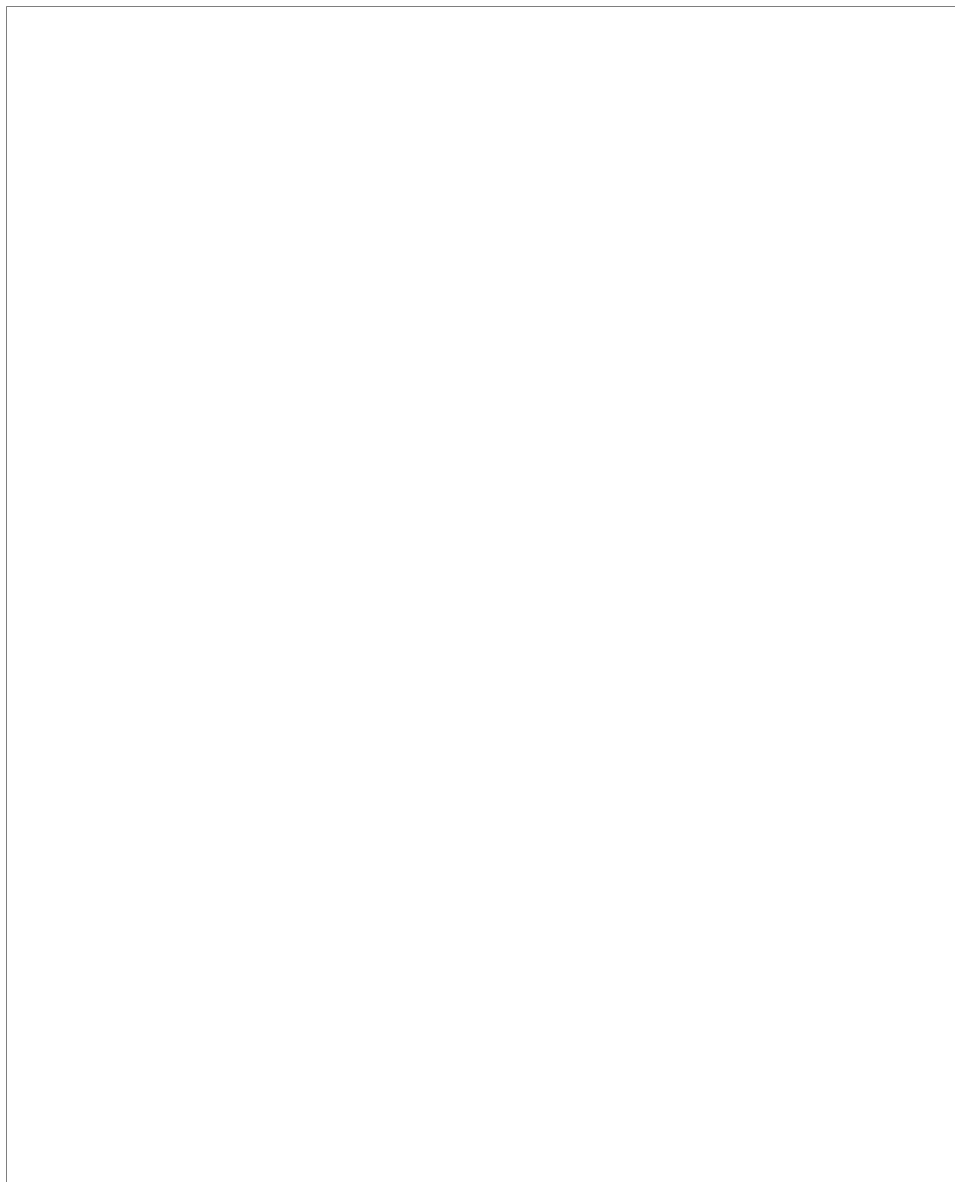
Party chief Brezhnev on Tuesday addressed the Politburo, Central Committee, and government officials convened in a conference on the harvest, reflecting the leadership's concern that this year's grain crop will be insufficient to meet both domestic and foreign requirements. Brezhnev's speech was not published.

The gathering of such an array of VIPs at the height of the Soviet vacation season indicates unusual concern over this year's harvest, which we estimate to be as much as ten percent less than in 1970 and 1971, largely because of severe winter weather and summer drought.

A poor harvest would decidedly set back Brezhnev's livestock program--designed to improve the Soviet consumer's diet--which requires a grain harvest substantially higher than those of the past two years. Moreover, we believe that the requirements of this program have already lowered Soviet wheat stocks to a level considered vital for strategic reserve.

The disappointing harvest prospects will require the Soviets to buy large amounts of foreign grain, mainly wheat, for delivery during the next year.

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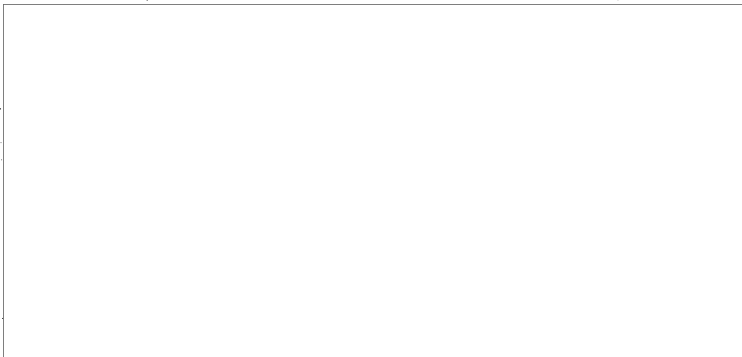


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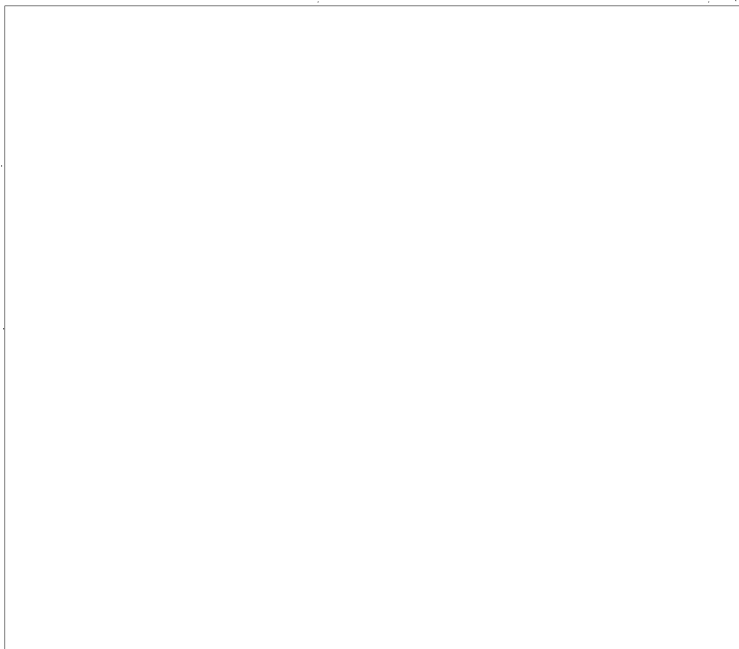
EGYPT-USSR

The Egyptians are reshuffling their forces to fill gaps created by the withdrawal of Soviet military personnel.

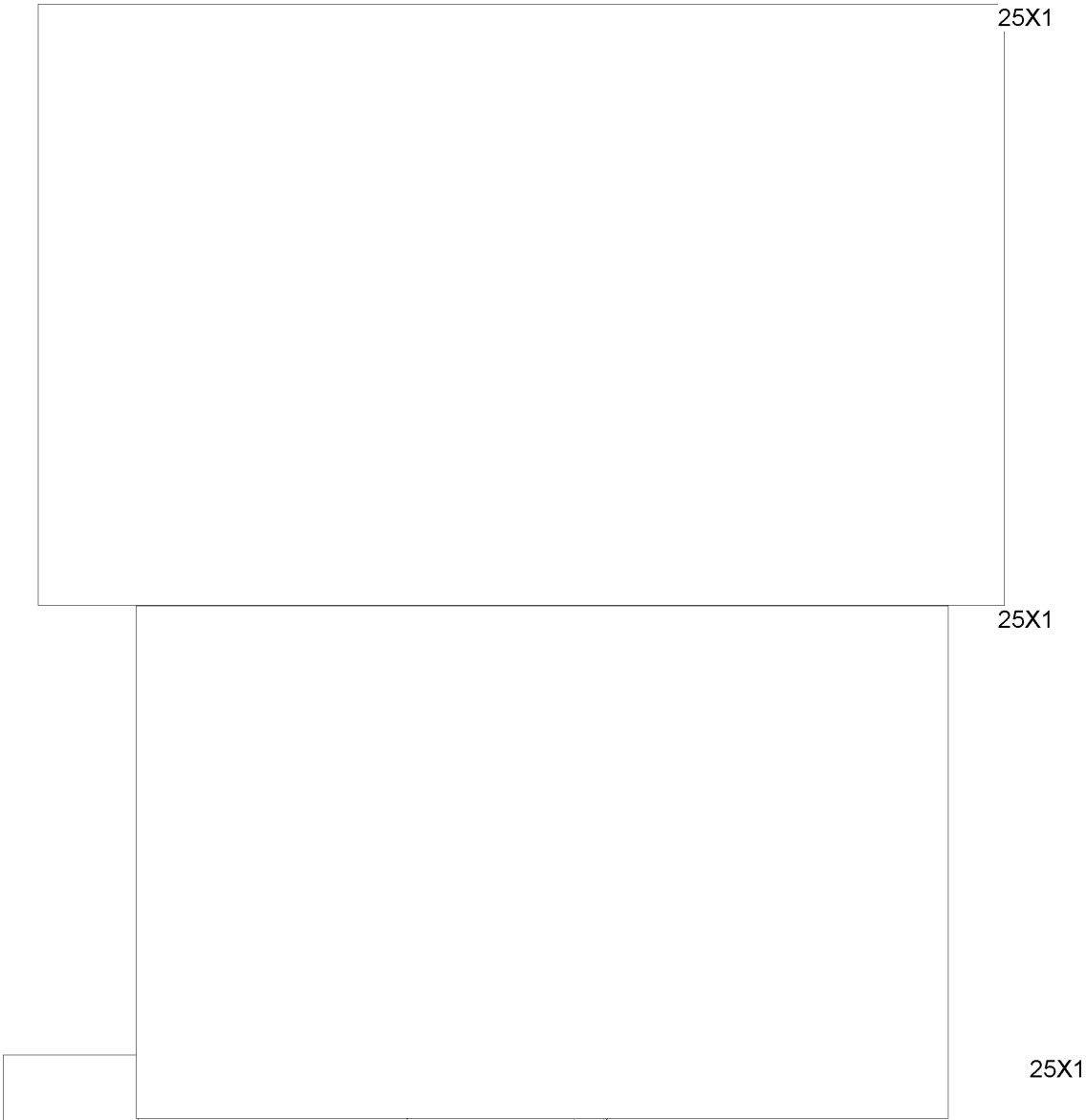


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The Soviet withdrawal may near completion by the end of the month.



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Satellite photography shows activity in progress at 13 of the 62 soft sites for the SS-7 ICBM which will render them incapable of launching missiles without a great deal more preparation than usual.

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JAPAN-US

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Japanese media are giving heavy coverage to the success of leftist demonstrators who on 6 August prevented US Army tanks destined for Vietnam from being loaded at Yokohama's pier. Later, workers at the base where the tanks are overhauled voted not to repair US tanks bound for Vietnam in the future, marking one of the few times that Japanese workers at US bases have refused to carry out duties for political reasons. Leaders of the Japan Socialist Party, the largest opposition party, joined with the leader of Japan's largest trade federation and the leftist governor of Tokyo in promising similar actions against US bases on a nationwide scale.

The Tanaka government's freedom to act in such situations is limited by Socialist strength at the local government level in areas in which US bases are concentrated. As a possible harbinger of things to come, the Tokyo metropolitan government on 5 August announced it was refusing to extend its annual contract with the national government to lease to the US the land occupied by the busy Yokota Air Base in Tokyo's suburbs. The contract expires in February. Tokyo government officials threaten to take the case to court, if necessary.

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NOTE

China:

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